

# Why Did the Eight-Year Zero Petition Succeed? —— Based on the Investigation of Grid Governance Model of Xianlin Street Crane Community in Nanjing

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## Abstract

Since the reform and opening up, the living standard of residents has been constantly improving. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, after meeting the physiological needs of food and clothing, people are increasingly pursuing the need of self-realization, and have more and more voice. As an autonomous organization of residents, community plays a role of reflecting people's demands and mediating people's contradictions, and builds a bridge of communication between residents and the government. By investigating Xianlin Street Xianhe Community, we found that the grid governance mode of Xianlin Street crane Community, through the way of Party and government embedding, voluntary visits, cloud information collection, fully mediated the contradictions of residents and solved the people's demands from the source, realized the situation of "zero petition" for eight consecutive years, and its successful experience is worth learning from other places.

## Keywords

Letters and visits; gridding; residents'self-governing organizations; multi-participation.

## 1. Analysis of the Questions and Reasons of Letters and Visits

### 1.1. Letters and Visits

Since the reform and opening up, petition work has been constantly adjusting and reforming itself in the process of safeguarding rights and interests and promoting reform. Due to the increase of social contradictions, complexity and diversity, as well as the change of social conditions and public opinion, there are also inadaptable and unreasonable aspects in the work of letters and visits. For example, sometimes the response to the masses' demands is not timely, sometimes the solution is not effective, and so on. Objectively speaking, the ordinary people, especially the vulnerable groups, are relatively large among the petitioners. They are still accustomed to using the complaint method of "beating drums and complaining grievances in front of the government", and petitioners naturally become their preferred means of expressing their appeals and safeguarding their rights and interests. Many matters that should have passed administrative reconsideration and administrative litigation have also entered the field of letters and visits, which has increased the burden of letters and visits departments and organizations. They go up to state organs and government departments, down to various streets and communities, and receive countless cases of letters and visits every day. If the residents can not handle them properly, they will appeal to them, which will make the staff of various organs and units feel relieved.

In the process of Xianlin Street Xianhe Community Survey, Director Ding mentioned to us: "Once, a deputy director of Xianyin North Road reflected to her that there was a household on the first floor in the community, the woman owner had children, and the mother in the countryside brought several old hens to make up for her daughter, and temporarily scattered

the chickens in the yard, which affected the environment. Some residents in the community are reluctant to go to the streets to petition, asking the government to come forward to solve this matter. Looking at our suspicious eyes, Director Ding explained, "It's not a trivial matter for us. It's easy to intensify contradictions if we can't handle it properly. So, I quickly called the parents of the landlady to explain the city management regulations, and asked two volunteers to help her kill the chicken. The old man's ideas were clear, and the problem was solved.

## 1.2. Cause Analysis

### 1.2.1. Economic Man Hypothesis

Economic Man Hypothesis was first put forward by Adam Smith, which refers to the pursuit of maximization of self-interest or utility. It is the basic motivation of individual behavior. When faced with a number of different choices, he always tends to choose the choices that can bring him greater benefits, that is, always pursuing the greatest benefits. This is human nature, community residents in order to meet their best interests will inevitably damage the interests of other residents, and the residents who are damaged by him will take their own interests as the first, and strive for their best interests in the way of letters and visits, which is the fundamental reason for endless letters and visits.

### 1.2.2. Regulatory Government

In terms of governance pattern, the regulatory government embodies the pattern of rule by man. The administrative subject always solves and deals with problems according to subjective assumptions and realizes its own will through public power. The government does not know enough about the daily life of residents, fails to realize the transformation from control-service-oriented to full play of the role of social organizations, relying solely on the one-way treatment of government-residents, and fails to give full play to the role of multi-participation of Government-Social organizations-residents.

## 2. The Way to Solve the Problem of Letters and Visits: Grid Governance Model

### 2.1. What Is Grid Governance Mode?

Under the leadership of the District Committee, the District Government and the University Town Management Committee, with the support of the relevant departments and street units in Nanjing, the Party and Labor Committee of Xianlin Street launched the "grid" urban management in June 2010. At present, Xianlin Street adopts the structure of "three-level grid", which is led by Xianlin Street and consists of 10 first-level grids, such as the crane community; 156 second-level grids are divided into 1786 third-level grids under the first-level grids. Each three-level grid can be a road, a river, a community, a college, a storefront. (See Table I)

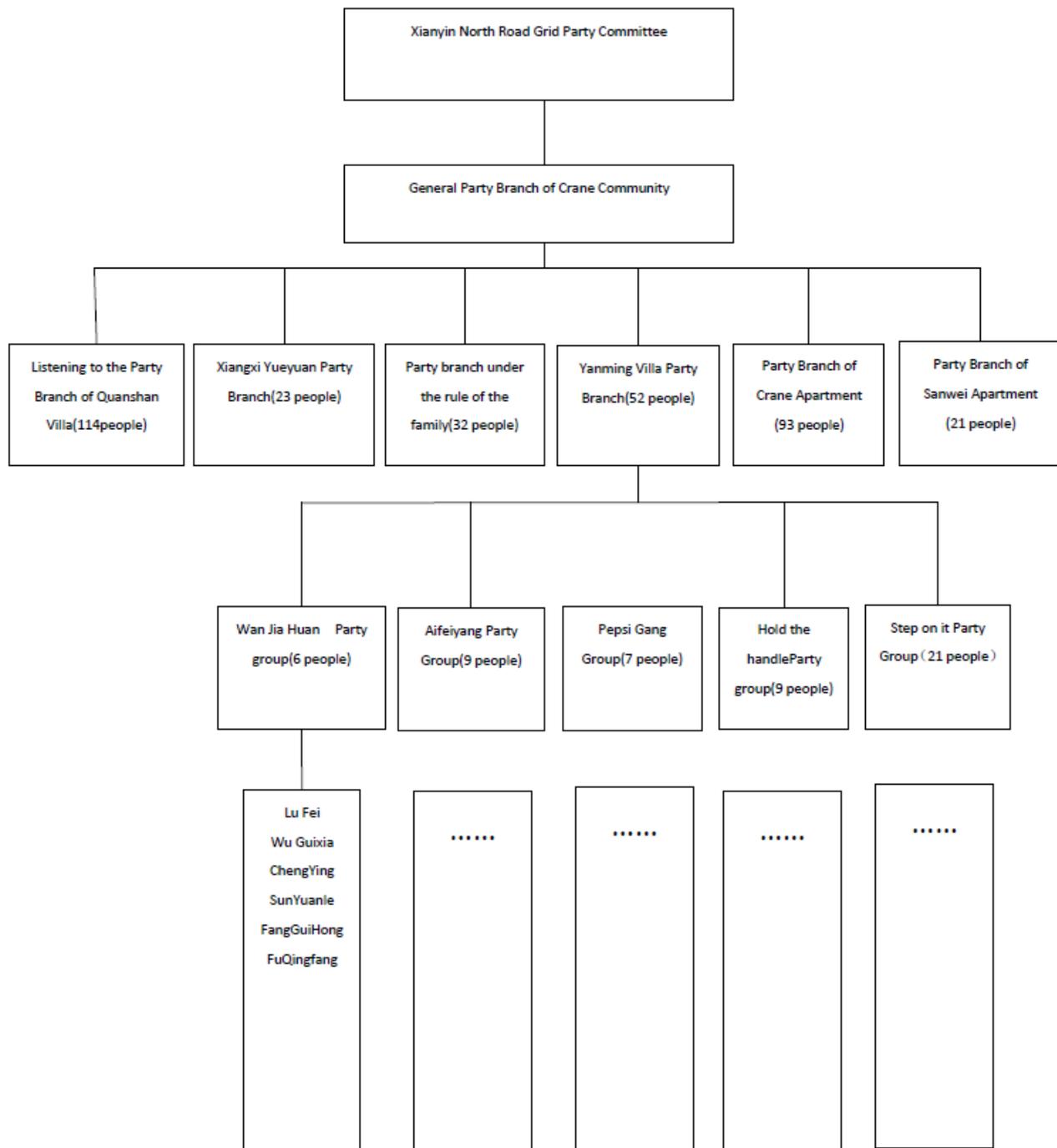
**Table 1.** Xianlin Street Grid Level and Number

Grid Level	Number
First Level Grid(communities)	10
Second Level Grid	156
Third Level Grid(roads, rivers, residential districts, colleges, stores)	1786

The crane community mainly consists of high-grade villas and garden houses, including: crane villa, crane villa apartment, Yanming villa, Qinlan Yazhu, Yongmei villa, Yingquan villa, Xiangxi Yueyuan, Jinling family, army family area, Bible Academy, film and television base. It covers an

area of 659.5 million square meters and a total building area of 387,000 square meters. The total number of buildings is 3200 households and the total number is 10,053.

The crane community is basically divided into two levels of grid by the unit of the community, and then the specific elements of the community are subdivided, such as shops, into three levels of grid, which is the smallest management unit. The grid at all levels is responsible for the work of Party committees, government staff and Party members, and manages the volunteers and property companies in the grid at all levels. Led by Party building, the basic layout of Party organization is "1 + 3 + N" (see figure 1), "1" refers to the Xianyin North Road Grid Party Committee, "3" refers to the three-level grid Party



**Fig 1.** The "1+3+N" Party Organization Framework of Xianyin North Road Grid (Take Yanming Villa Party Branch as an example)

## **2.2. The Role of Grid Governance Model in Letter and Visit Work**

### **2.2.1. Promoting the Government's Image**

So far, Xianlin Street has maintained the first place in the city's urban management assessment for more than five consecutive years, and has won 15 national honors. Over the past eight years, through the establishment of "grid daily visits" and "normal 40,000 visits" and other mechanisms, the streets have enabled a huge volunteer team to enter the grid, enter units, buildings and families, adhering to the concept of "people in the grid, things in the network, difficult to solve in the network, complex in the network", accurately grasping the residents' reflection problems, timely resolution of contradictions and hidden dangers, to achieve the above-district visits. It lasted eight years to zero.

### **2.2.2. Happiness Index of Residents Rises**

From the beginning, when the problem was ignored to now it was solved immediately, the opinions of the community residents were fully responded to. Community-based Party member activity centers, senior citizens activity centers and so on have provided carriers for community services, and the convenience of residents' lives has greatly increased. Efficient resident-government communication mechanism also resolves the emotional confrontation caused by information asymmetry, improves the degree of trust between residents and the government, and reduces unnecessary resistance to affairs.

### **2.2.3. Improvement of the Efficiency of Management Organizations**

The improvement of the efficiency of management institutions is related to letters and visits. So each of us is a mobile correspondent. A community worker told reporters that in June 2010, the work of street grid service had just started, when she was a social worker. He often chatted with the resident, Uncle Zhao, when he visited the neighborhood. "One day, Uncle Zhao told me that the residents opposed the smoke from the restaurant next door to the community, and they were going to visit the district." As soon as the staff member listened, she heard that some residents were against it, but she didn't expect it would intensify to appeal. She rushed to report to the community secretary, and everyone tried to do their work, which eventually defused the petition.

Through routine inspection and opinion reflection, Community Grid staff grasped and resolved many problems and disputes at the first time, eliminated contradictions at the grass-roots level, and realized the operation mechanism of "small problems do not go out, ordinary problems do not go out of the community, outstanding problems do not go out of the street, major difficult problems and timely report to the District government for disposal". The emergence of "yellow waistcoat" has greatly increased the number of effective cases and problems.

### **2.2.4. Save Social Costs**

Compared with the past practice of dealing with problems by government-funded personnel or purchasing outsourced services, the implementation of grid governance fully mobilizes the enthusiasm of community residents for self-government. The huge volunteer team has also lightened the economic burden of the community. At the same time, the infrastructure invested for this purpose has brought valuable welfare to the community residents.

## **3. Successful Experience of Grid Governance Model in Community Letters and Visits**

### **3.1. Institutional Level: the Incentive and Supervision Function of Embedding Party and Government**

Embedded management of the party and government system is the process of extending the party and government power tentacles to grassroots society and realizing social control. It is specifically to implement the party building work in grassroots social governance, and the

grassroots party organizations directly respond to the interests of grassroots society. Some scholars have noticed that the grid management of Party and government leaders can absorb the resources of urban social governance, exert the "absorption effect" and "link effect" of Party and government organizations, and can shape the political and social order at the grass-roots level in two aspects: first, it provides space for the development of social and market organizations in grass-roots governance; second, it improves the service and governance capabilities of grass-roots party and government systems; and at the same time, it can improve the service and governance capabilities of grass-roots. It will help the state power infiltrate into the grass-roots society and integrate the increasingly differentiated society. In the process of transformation of grass-roots social governance, it is difficult for grass-roots organizations to cover the space of social life, and the scattered grass-roots Party organizations often result in the weak situation of grass-roots social management. The Nineteenth National Congress of the Party clearly pointed out that "the grass-roots organizations of the Party are the basis for ensuring the implementation of the Party's line, principles, policies and decision-making arrangements." Therefore, the Party building work is embedded in the grass-roots social governance in the way of institutionalization, organization and grid. Through top-down infiltration and coverage to grass-roots society, it becomes a link between the state and society in the social field, thus realizing the governance goal of social control.

The Chinese government implements hierarchical organization structure. When hierarchical organizations achieve hierarchical control, there will be incentive problems. Due to information asymmetry, monopoly and team externalities, hierarchical incentive system can not alleviate the action dilemma of hierarchical organizations. Therefore, when the front-line law enforcement personnel react to the system incentive with self-interest, or when the managers establish the incentive system with self-interest behavior, it will easily lead to the result of inefficient governance, which is manifested in the weak incentive structure of "unequal power and responsibility" in grass-roots practice.

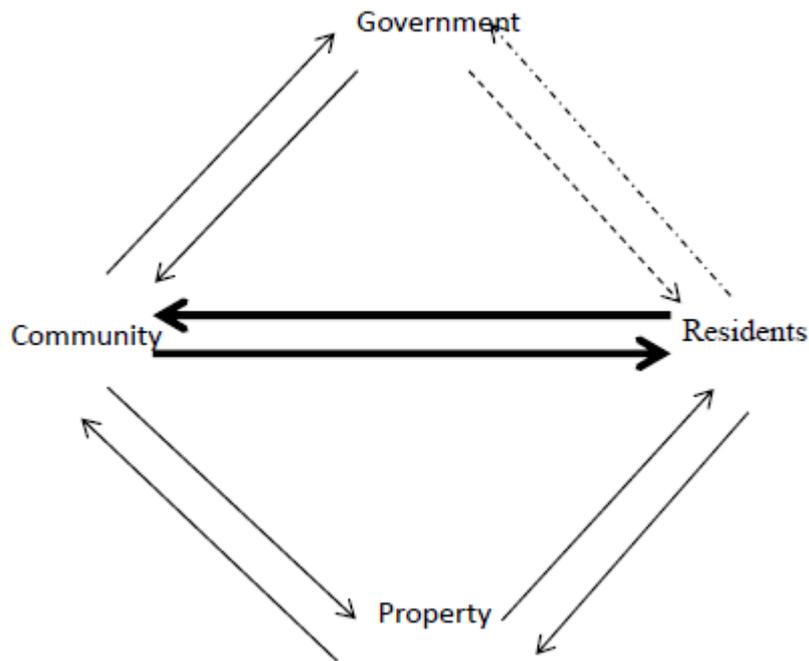
The grid of Xianlin Street Xianhe Community adopts the form of Party branch and Party group, which effectively avoids the self-interest of bureaucracy. When solving the problem of letters and visits of residents, we can serve the people wholeheartedly, without discount or excuse, so as to greatly improve the efficiency of solving the problem of letters and visits.

### **3.2. Organizational Level: The "Link" Role of Grass-roots Resident Autonomous Organizations**

High-end residential areas are the main areas under the jurisdiction of the crane community, and the residents are mainly high-income groups of university teachers and self-employed people and a certain number of foreigners. This has contributed to the fairy crane community's more unique management model. The governance mode of Xianhe Community Grid is mainly the seamless combination of Party political theory and residents' autonomy. Both sides actively communicate and negotiate to form a multi-governance system of Xianhe Community. Governance departments include street Party committees, labor committees and street governments. Resident autonomous personnel include residents, property, volunteers, social organizations, street units, etc. Residents report problems to nearby volunteers or grid leaders. Street receives information to deal with rectification immediately. Small matters are handled and settled in the street. Major events are reported to the district in time for response. Through the laying of grid network, the government has also succeeded in obtaining refined information access channels, so as to achieve a more comprehensive perception and analysis of community conditions. Through the detailed management of volunteer team, the vertical dimension of "people to grid" deep governance is guaranteed, and the horizontal dimension of extensive autonomy is formed through the linkage between residents and units.

### 3.2.1. Horizontal Dimension: Multiple Participation

The grid governance model of Xianlin street Xianhe community breaks the traditional one-way government-residents treatment model, and introduces the community as a grass-roots autonomous organization to act as a "link" between the government and residents. Professor Yu Keping mentioned in "Governance and Good Governance" that the main body of the model of good governance is not necessarily the government, nor does it need to rely on the compulsory force of the state to achieve. For a long time, the uniqueness of the public power center has been tacitly accepted as an irreplaceable principle, but the theory of good governance has diversified the public power center. In addition to the government, all kinds of institutions (including social and private ones) can become the center of public power only if they are recognized by the public. Public power is no longer monopolized by the government, making the relationship between the government and other public power centers is no longer the relationship between managers and managed, but a new relationship of equal cooperation and interaction. The good governance model emphasizes the cooperation between the state and society, blurs the clear boundaries between the public and private spheres, and emphasizes the dependence relationship between the state and society more. As a mode of government management, good governance has many links with market, social autonomous organizations, social intermediary organizations and social independent organizations. Governance that exists in the private sector and in the third sector is not a closed system. They are closely related to government governance. In modern society, the state is transferring its original responsibility to civil society. Good governance is an interactive management process, which emphasizes the participation of management objects. The direction of the ruling power is top-down. It uses the political authority of the government to implement a single-dimensional management of social and public affairs by issuing orders, formulating policies and implementing policies. In contrast, good governance is an interactive management process, which mainly implements the management of public affairs through cooperation, consultation, partnership, identification and common goals. The essence of good governance lies in cooperation based on market principles, public interests and identity. Its management mechanism does not depend on the authority of the government, but on the authority of the cooperative network. Its power orientation is pluralistic and mutual, rather than single and top-down. Good governance organizations come not from authorization, but from consultation, which is produced by equal consultation among members. The rules of procedure and procedures within the organization are agreed upon by the members through consultation. Through thorough democratic consultation, members' opinions can be fully expressed, with a very flexible interest expression mechanism, which can better reflect openness, fairness and justice. Good governance also means the diversification of management methods and means. The typical model of rule is to use orders to achieve goals. The model of good governance holds that the ability to do things well is not limited to the power of the government. In the management of public affairs, there are other management methods and techniques. The government should use all kinds of feasible methods to achieve good management of public affairs (Fig. 2: The "Good Governance" chart of the multi-participation of the crane community).



**Fig 2.** Multi-participation of the crane community in the "good governance" map (line of the real and weak, thick and thin representative of the strong and weak relationship)

On the issue of community residents' letters and visits, the government supervises and manages the community, which is a process of feedback and upload to the government; the role between the government and residents has been weakened, and there is no direct connection between the government and the residents from the grid point of view, which reduces the burden of the government; the connection between the community and residents has been strengthened, and the mobile phone numbers of the staff are all for the people in the "network" contracted by themselves. The public is open. If people have problems to solve and need consultation, they call Street cadres directly, which changes the traditional situation that people have problems and need to go to management centers to petition and go to the door to find staff members. This makes the staff and the people more closely linked, the efficiency of problem handling is higher, and the satisfaction of the people to community governance is improved. Compared with the past, the relationship between the industry has also been greatly improved, with staff specializing in property management, community staff coordinating, and the relationship between property and residents has also improved.

### 3.2.2. Longitudinal Dimension: Volunteer Recruitment and Management

Recruitment and management of volunteers is a prerequisite for solving community letters and visits. First of all, these volunteers are enthusiastic and caring, mostly middle-aged women, who live in the community for a long time, are familiar with community affairs, and are good at mediating community disputes.

Secondly, the staff "go to the grid, do things in the network", every day in the community wearing yellow vest service personnel, volunteers, volunteers in the patrol, grid work arrangements are more detailed and responsible. Community work has changed from passive to active, changing the traditional way that staff are waiting for problems to be alerted by the public to solve the dilemma, arranging people to work in the grid every day, staff will find problems at the first time, without waiting for complaints from the public level can solve the problem, work actively. Finally, grid managers at all levels can accurately grasp the wishes and needs of the masses, timely identify social contradictions and problems, strengthen risk

response and management, and strive to achieve "problem first rectification, dispute first resolution, security hidden dangers first disposal".

### **3.3. Technical Level: Seamless Collection of Grass-roots Governance Information**

The grid management of Xianlin Street Crane Community adopts the way of "cloud" information collection. Each of 1786 three-level "grids" is the "tentacle" and "processor" of information, and each of the four "centers" is the "platform" for information storage and sharing. They have established the mechanism of "daily comment, short message exchange, weekly summary, briefing, monthly assessment and public ranking" to realize the communication. The collection of information prevents the segmentation of blocks and realizes the integration from point to surface. The information of each community under Xianlin Street is not closed, but timely information exchange. What letters and visits exist in a community can not be solved by its own community. If other communities encounter similar situations, they can help. If they encounter difficult problems, they can work together to solve them. Conflicts should be resolved in time and problems should be solved in time. Information collection is "seamless", information exchange is improved smoothly, the problem of messenger visits is solved at the community level, and a harmonious and beautiful home is built together.

## **4. Conclusion**

Letter interview has always been a thorny issue in China. There are endless articles, films and TV works about letter interview in China. Its representative is "I am not Pan Jinlian" and so on. The grid governance model of Xianlin street Xianhe community is a miniature of solving the problem of letters and visits at the grass-roots level. Its incentive and supervision measures embedded in the party and government, the consciousness of pluralistic participation, the link role of community autonomous organizations, and the technical support of "cloud" information collection have made the problem of letters and visits in the community solved to a considerable extent, and for eight consecutive years, it has been "zero petitioned" to the higher authorities. Imagine that if all communities and grassroots governments in the country can learn from and absorb the grid governance model of Xianlin Street Crane Community, then the letter and visit problem will be solved by leaps and bounds.

At present, China's social governance is confronted with such problems as fragmentation, decentralization and inadequate response ability of the party and government. Under the dual effects of the transformation of economic and social system and the accelerated development of new urbanization, social governance is facing the need of transformation and innovation. The Fourth Plenary Session of the Eighteenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China clearly pointed out that "to comprehensively promote the rule of law, the foundation is at the grass-roots level, and the focus of work is at the grass-roots level". Grass-roots units are the frontline of contacts between the state and society, and the end of the entry of state power into society. Promoting grass-roots social governance plays an important fundamental role in building a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics and a socialist country ruled by law. Through the grid governance model of Xianlin street Xianhe community, it is of great practical significance to construct a social governance system and mechanism suitable for social transformation and governance transformation, so as to innovate the way of social governance and improve the capacity of social governance, for the modernization of national governance system and governance capacity.

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